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LETTER DATED 22 APRIL 1996 FROM THE CHARGE D'AFFAIRES A.I. OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF THE DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of a statement by the spokesman of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea dated 12 April 1996.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) KIM Su Man
Ambassador
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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Annex

Statement of the Spokesman of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea at Pyongyang on 12 April 1996

Those who spread false rumours are deliberately distorting the essence of the present situation, branding the self-defensive measure of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as a "political provocation" aimed at a "specific purpose" and as a "tactics of diplomatic pressure" on someone and foolishly attempting to describe the provocateur as a "defender of peace" and the victim as a "disturber of peace".

It has been officially explained on several occasions why the armed forces of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea could not but take a positive self-defensive measure.

As is well known, the South Korean authorities, zealously backed by the bellicose quarters of the United States, this year have entered into the stage of executing in real earnest the long-prepared plan of war against the north.

From the beginning of the year, surprise attack exercises and joint naval exercises were held one after another throughout South Korea on the ground and in the sea and the sky. A large combined military exercise of South Korea code named "Hoguk 96" took place from late March to early April.

At the same time, the United States military staged a United States-South Korea joint military exercise with nearly 1,000 warplanes, including B-1s and B-52s. The situation has developed towards the danger line strikingly similar to the eve of war.

The scope of the military exercises of the enemies is 30 per cent larger than last year and 50 per cent larger than the previous years. What this figure means is clear to everyone.

What is all the more intolerable is that the South Korean authorities have turned the demilitarized zone along the military demarcation line into a completely militarized zone and a new starting position for attack.

The South Korean authorities, who had long since ignored the provisions of the Armistice Agreement on the maintenance and management of the demilitarized zone, brought various types of heavy weapons and built military facilities in the southern portion of the demilitarized zone. They went so far as to build openly a position at an area 100 metres from the military demarcation line.

We could not look with folded arms at the dramatic situation in the hope of getting anyone's recognition in the face of obvious war preparations taking place in the area of one of the hostile parties.

It is only too legitimate that our armed forces, responsible for the security of the country and the nation, exercise the right to self-defence to prevent the outbreak of a war and safeguard peace and security.

Nevertheless, the South Korean authorities and United States bellicose right-wing conservatives are misleading public opinion with the allegation that we have "destroyed" the Armistice Agreement for a "specified purpose", including the signing of a tentative agreement with the United States.

Their allegation is nothing but a deception aimed at covering up the true colours of the provokers and justifying their war moves.

We want peace, but never beg for it. This is our unshakeable faith.

The enemy's maladroit drama has been snubbed by the world's people who are able to judge what is right and it has only added fuel to the animosity of our people and army against the enemy.

The Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has put forward a realistic proposal and made sustained, patient efforts to replace the armistice with a durable peace in the Korean peninsula.

With a view to filling the high-risk blank in security under the already collapsed armistice system and preserving peace, we proposed a new peace mechanism and made an official announcement that we were willing to observe the Armistice Agreement until it was established.

It implied that the present armistice system will remain in effect until a new system is set up.

The point is to establish a new peace-keeping system as early as possible in place of the present armistice system.

As part of the efforts for its establishment, we recently put forward an epoch-making proposal to renew the impotent Armistice Agreement as a tentative agreement in the hope of preventing any casual armed conflict in the demilitarized zone.

Our efforts, however, have failed to fructify in time owing to the enemy's unreasonable position.

The blame for the destroyed Korean Armistice Agreement lies with the United States, which has historically and systematically wrecked and violated the Armistice Agreement and Armistice supervisory tools in the name of United Nations forces, and with the South Korean authorities under United States patronage.

As soon as it signed the Armistice Agreement, the United States side blocked the possibility of a peaceful coordination of the Korean issue from the beginning by intentionally foiling the convocation of a higher-level political conference which was envisaged in paragraph 60 of the Armistice Agreement.

In 1957 it unilaterally breached subparagraph 13 (d), which provides for cessation of the introduction into Korea of reinforcing military equipment and combat matériel, and declared it would not submit a report on the replacement of the old combat matériel with the new one.

And it obstructed in every way the activities of the neutral nations inspection teams which had been sent to Inchon, Taegu, Kangrung, Pusan and Kunsan, ports of entry, under paragraph 43 of the Armistice Agreement and drove them out of the areas by force.

Over the past 40-odd years, two thirds of the paragraphs of the Armistice Agreement have not been implemented owing to the United States and the South Korean authorities. The Agreement therefore has remained a mere scrap of paper which cannot help preserve peace on the Korean peninsula.

Moreover, the United States appointed a General of the South Korean puppet army, who has neither qualification nor power, as the senior member of the United Nations forces side to the Military Armistice Commission in 1991, thus completely paralysing the function and role of the Commission.

All this proves clearly who is the very one that has systematically destroyed the Armistice Agreement and aggravated tensions on the Korean peninsula.

This notwithstanding, the South Korean authorities took the matter to the United Nations Security Council, clamouring about the "destruction" of the Armistice Agreement by someone and "provocation" in the demilitarized zone. It is the height of impudence.

What should be done, though belatedly, by the United Nations, whose name and flag have been misused for the destruction of the Armistice Agreement in the past period, is to remember its unpleasant past concerning the Korean issue and to charge the United States and the South Korean authorities with systematically destroying the Armistice Agreement and reducing it to a meaningless one.

The United States, a signatory to the Armistice Agreement, should look squarely at the matter and act with discretion at the present juncture decisive of the fate of the situation.

If the insidious elements, bereft of reason, dance to the tune of others, history will call them to account because they are heavily responsible for the irrevocable disaster inflicted upon humankind.

Convinced of the justness of our cause, we do not mind whatever anyone says.

We will never change the position we adopted reflecting our resolution.